Andrzej Kurylewicz & Wanda Warska - Somnambumlists (1961)



1.Moonray 2.Somnambulists play *3.Stompin' at the Savoy* play *4.Lover man 5.You'd be so nice to come home to 6.But not for me 7.Ballada o straconej gazy (A ballad about a lost job) 8.Tubby*
Andrzej Kurylewicz - piano Wanda Warska - vocal Jan Byrczek - double bass Andrzej Dąbrowski - bass

Unfortunately I was able to listen to this album only in form of mp3. Therefore I couldn't read liner notes. I am not even sure who exactly play on this album. As in cases of many Polish jazz albums information is scarce, incomplete or nonexistent. With this album it is even more exasperating than usual as it is truly a pearl, brilliant work embodying many characteristic features of such a unique phenomenon as Polish jazz.

First, it is as much based on bop jazz as on classical music. Most of "founding fathers" of jazz in Poland (Andrzej Kurylewicz is one of them) had strong classical music background. But it didn't manifest itself in imitating what was already well known in classical music but rather in refreshing it using novelties which were brought to music by jazz. Of these novelties most important for Polish musicians were rhythm, improvisation, sound individuality and freedom to form.

Second, before II World War jazz had been present in Poland being however of no artistic importance. It had been then simply poor copy of American music. When in second half of 50ties it was born again, almost from the beginning it wore marks of the great art, being part or even walking in spearhead of the great renaissance of different arts in Poland. Those different art movements were not developing separately but they affected each other. Especially fruitful was relationship between Polish jazz and cinema. Like for example with Art Tatum ballad "Moonray", here in interpretation by legendary Wanda Warska, which became guiding theme for

cult movie "Pociąg" (Train) directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, one of the most important directors of so-called Polish film school.

Finally, Polish culture was strongly influenced by France. Among many things which had been taken over from that country is a tradition of chansons françaises. It means that songs are rather simple, melodious but at the same time being just a departure point for small theater where singer often uses acting techniques to strengthen artistic effect. That is exactly what vocalist Wanda Warska is doing on this album. She is backed by the highest quality jazz musicians in persons of pianist Andrzej Kurylewicz, bassist Jan Byrczek and drummer Andrzej Dąbrowski. I guess that Jerzy Milian is playing on vibraphone though I am not sure. Unfortunately I cannot find who is playing on trumpet... Summarizing, this is simply brilliant piece of music that I can only wholeheartedly recommend! ---Maciej Nowotny, polish-jazz.blogspot.com

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